

Message Text

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P R 072255Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
INFO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, US, SO

SUBJECT: SOMALI INVOLVEMENT IN OGADEN -- PRESS GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING FOR POSTS' INFORMATION IS PRESS GUIDANCE
PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN AND USED IN ITS ENTIRETY
AT JUNE 7 NOON BRIEFING. IT MAY BE DRAWN ON AS NECESSARY
IN RESPONSE TO LOCAL QUESTIONS.

2. GUIDANCE:

Q. THE NEW YORK TIMES HAS A REPORT THAT THE SOMALIS ARE
BACK IN ETHIOPIA, DISGUISED AS GUERRILLAS. CAN WE CONFIRM
THIS, AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE ASSURANCES THE SOMALIS
GAVE US (THAT THEY WOULD NOT USE FORCE AGAINST OTHER
COUNTRIES)?

A. WE CANNOT CONFIRM THIS REPORT. HOWEVER, WE HAVE MADE
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CLEAR TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA THAT RENEWED MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT BY SOMALIA IN THE OGADEN WOULD BE INCONSISTENT
WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN US THAT SOMALIA WILL NOT USE
FORCE AGAINST OTHERS EXCEPT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY OR
LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE. WE ARE OF COURSE WATCHING THIS
SITUATION CLOSELY.

Q. WOULD SOMALI SUPPORT TO THE OGADEN INSURGENTS CONSTITUTE "MILITARY INVOLVEMENT BY SOMALIA IN THE OGADEN"?
WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

A. THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT IT DOES NOT CONTROL THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT OR THE OTHER INSURGENT GROUPS IN THE OGADEN, ALTHOUGH IT DOES SUPPORT THE GOAL OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR WHICH THESE GROUPS ARE FIGHTING. THE QUESTION OF THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN MORAL SUPPORT AND MATERIAL INVOLVEMENT IS OBVIOUSLY A DIFFICULT ONE AND ULTIMATELY A MATTER OF JUDGMENT. IT IS NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR REALISTIC TO ESTABLISH AN ABSOLUTE STANDARD IN THIS AREA OR TO EXPECT THAT WE OR THE SOMALIS COULD COMPLETELY MONITOR COMPLIANCE BY EVERY LOCAL COMMANDER. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THEIR ASSURANCES EXTEND TO MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS, AND THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS UNDERSTANDING.

3. TEXT OF NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE (BY MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN, DATELINED NAIROBI, JUNE 6) WILL BE CARRIED IN WIRELESS FILE. VANCE

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